

growing chorus of critics dismissing “human dignity” as a vacuous, useless term generally employed as a substitute for other notions. Kirchoffer’s book persuasively rescues “human dignity” from friends and foes alike by illustrating how a more complex and multidimensional model of this idea can serve as a meaningful ethical concept.

Attending closely to the criticisms of “dignity talk” that fails to adequately define or consistently employ the concept of human dignity, K. acknowledges that a hermeneutics of suspicion has uncovered genuine weaknesses in the contemporary ethical use of this concept. At the same time, he makes a strong case that contemporary critics who dismiss the use of human dignity rely too exclusively on a hermeneutics of suspicion and a narrow understanding of the role of ethics and the nature of both the human person and moral experience.

K. proposes a middle path between uncritical use and complete dismissal of “dignity talk” by offering an enriched multidimensional model of human dignity, identifying four distinct dimensions of dignity—existential, cognitive-affective, behavioral, and social—and distinguishing between the realized and potential dignity of persons. The differing components of this model show how human dignity encompasses more than just personal autonomy or sanctity of life, while the distinction between realized and potential human dignity explains how this concept can be seen as the ground and goal of our recognition of various human rights.

In this creative and articulate proposal, K. moves beyond both “dignity talk” planted in thin soil and its critics relying on thin notions of ethics, the human person, and moral experience. His multidimensional model of human dignity offers a thick, contextual, and unfolding grasp of human persons and the moral contexts in which they seek to protect and realize a shared dignity. The analysis allows “human dignity” to serve as both a descriptive and normative ethical concept that avoids moralism and relativism.

Patrick T. McCormick
Gonzaga University, Spokane

Vocation to Virtue: Christian Marriage as a Consecrated Life. By Kent J. Lasnoski. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2014. Pp. xiv + 247. \$65.

With this book Lasnoski makes a distinctive contribution to the field of family ethics. He argues that both marriage and consecrated religious life are “domestic practices of being consecrated and conformed to Christ” that should be animated by the evangelical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience (34). He joins contemporary theologians who think about marriage as a practice (e.g., Judith M. Bennett, David Matzko McCarthy, Florence Caffrey Bourg), but questions the widely accepted narrative of a church that has only gradually come to appreciate the spiritual potential of marriage. By his account, Augustine’s theology of marriage (often viewed as limited because of his emphasis on procreation, negative view of sexual desire, and affirmation of gender hierarchy) appropriately situates marriage in relation to consecrated life. Similarly,

L.'s reading of the life of Christ as marked by poverty, chastity, and obedience challenges contemporary emphasis on Jesus as liberator of the oppressed and thus implicitly critiques theologies of the family that prioritize commitments to social justice. His adaptation of the concept of a monastic rule for married life flows directly from the theological foundation he has constructed. It is marked by defined roles for husband and wife, morning and evening prayer, and substantial time with children (209–15).

L.'s project recovers resources from the tradition that have been overlooked in much of contemporary theology of the family and points toward a rigorous way of life for Christian married couples. It is reminiscent of mid-20th-century writing on the family by Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward and will be welcomed by those drawn to intentional, traditional ways of life. Many contemporary readers will be less convinced by the somewhat uncritical readings of Scripture and tradition, as well as by the call for obedience rather than mutuality and discernment, for chastity in connection with natural family planning rather than sexual intimacy, and for a poverty marked by dependence rather than simplicity and work for justice in the world. This clearly written and engaging text will provoke discussion in the classroom and among scholars of virtue ethics, as it challenges widely held theological claims about marriage and understandings of the good life.

Julie Hanlon Rubio
St. Louis University

Dark Light of Love. By John S. Dunne. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2014. Pp. x + 99. \$20.

“My life is a journey in time and God is my companion on the way,” said Dunne (1), and that journey ended in November 2013 with his untimely death. D.'s spiritual adventure, as he called it, began with the question, “If I must die someday, what can I do to fulfill my desire to live?” This line fittingly appears also on the last page of prose (73) in this posthumously published book.

Over the course of his 17 previous books, D.'s journey had become increasingly mystical. The current work is one of the best contemporary examples of Bernard Lonergan's fifth functional specialty, foundations (*Method in Theology*, 1972). Foundations focuses on the “fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is” and on the subsequent development of appropriate theological categories.

D. engages *The Cloud of Unknowing* and asks “How, though, is a soul oned with God in a cloud of unknowing?” (2). He finds the answer in the life journey itself in which “things are meant, there are signs, the heart speaks, there is a way” (66; phrases from Tolkien). Such attention to the particulars of one's life reveals that “the human inscape is an inner landscape opening onto infinity, opening onto eternity, opening onto life and light and love” (46).

Like D.'s other books, *Dark Light* cannot be read rapidly or only once. His style demands an approach akin to *lectio divina*, in which readers seek the resonances of the